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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAPE TOWN 000079

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ANC INSIDERS DISCUSS THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS

Classified By: Alberta Mayberry for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

The Chief Whip of the ANC, Mr. Mynami Booi

11. (C) On March 6, Poloff met with Mr. Mynami Booi, the Chief Whip of the African National Congress (ANC), and number 69 on the party list, to discuss the upcoming elections. Mr. Booi said that he is likely to remain the Chief Whip after the new government is formed in April, but said he was not sure whether the current speaker would remain the same. Booi explained that the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC would meet immediately following the election to appoint key positions in Parliament. The Speaker then will convene Parliament so that a president can be elected. In response to Poloff's question regarding what will happen to ANC President Jacob Zuma if his corruption case goes forward, Booi said &there is no way Zuma will step down as President of the ANC, despite his corruption trial.8

12. (C) When discussing Western Cape Provincial elections, Booi said the ANC Provincial Executive would debate the three names for Premier: Lynne Brown (current Premier of the Western Cape), Mcebisi Skwatsha (ANC Chairman for the Western Cape) and Chris Neeson (a business man and a relative unknown in politics) and make a formal recommendation to the NEC. When asked why Skwatsha would be included in the top three names when he was essentially a &lame duck8 within the ANC, Booi said many people in the Western Cape still like Skwatsha. Note: Neeson's name does not appear on any of the ANC's lists posted on its website, although both Booi and Tahir Salih (see below) said Neeson is in the running and Booi even encouraged Poloff to meet with Neeson and gave Poloff his phone number. End note.

3.(SBU) Poloff and Booi also discussed whether SA will be ready to proceed with the elections as planned on April 22 if overseas voters are allowed to vote, even the ones who are not already registered. Booi said, &I hope the Independent Electoral Commission is ready and does the right thing,8 but did not elaborate. Booi finished the meeting by saying he hopes U.S. President Obama will attend &Zuma,s inauguration in April.8

Tahir Salie, ANC member and right hand man to Presidential Advisor Ibrahim Rasool

14. (C) On March 9, Poloff met with Mr. Tahir Salie, an ANC member and right hand man to Mr. Ibrahim Rasool, former Premier of the Western Cape and currently an advisor to the President of SA, Kgalema Motlanthe. Salie discussed his views of the upcoming election with Poloff. When asked whether Zuma would consider withdrawing as the ANC's choice for President, he said the only way that would happen is if

Mandela told him to step down. Furthermore, Salie said that he and others in the ANC believe that the only reason Mandela attended a recent ANC rally in the Eastern Cape was in exchange for Zuma agreeing to step down as the ANC's choice for President if Mandela told him to as a result of Zuma's corruption trial & getting too hot.⁸ If Zuma were to step down, Salie thinks Baleka Mbete, the current Vice-President, would be the party's likely candidate, not Motlante. The NEC believes Motlante is too independent and the NEC does not like that, said Salie. When discussing ANC Youth League President Julius Malema and his influence over both the party and the voters, Salie said, &Zuma owes Malema for winning him the party's Presidency at the ANC Convention in Polikwane in December 2007.⁸ Furthermore, Salie thinks Malema's comments actually win the ANC votes rather than cost them votes.

15. (C) When discussing the race for the Western Cape, Salie believes either current Premier Lynne Brown or newcomer Chris Neeson would be appointed premier if the ANC wins the Western Cape. However, he believes the Democratic Alliance (DA) will win the province. He said Hellen Zille, the leader of the DA appeals to many people in the Western Cape, regardless of racial lines; due to her proven track record of service delivery during her tenure as Mayor of Cape Town. Salie also said that Congress of the People (COPE) is having trouble raising money and approached former Western Cape Premier, Ibrahim Rasool, as well as himself for donations, which they both declined to give. One example of COPE's lack of funds is the fact that there are no COPE campaign posters in the Western Cape, he said. In contrast to COPE's lack of funds, the ANC has a nine million rand (\$900,000) campaign

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budget in the Western Cape, more than any other province, said Salih.

16. (C) Salie said the ANC is concerned that Rasool will jump to COPE. Rasool was largely popular during his time as the Western Cape Premier and would pull a large number of colored voters, which is key in the Western Cape. To avoid Rasool going to COPE, the ANC has &promised⁸ him one of three key positions once the new government is elected: Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Trade and Industry, or Minister in the Presidency. When the ANC lists were published and Rasool saw he was number six on the Provincial to National List, he wrote a letter to ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe expressing his anger that he was not on the National to National list since he was promised a Cabinet level position if he remained with the ANC. Rasool was again &promised⁸ by top ANC officials that he would still receive one of the three previously mentioned positions. Salie also noted that COPE offered the Western Cape Premiership to Rasool if he joined COPE, which Rasool declined. Several times throughout the conversation, Salie expressed his disappointment that COPE was not better organized and that there seems to be so much infighting among COPE party leaders. He also said that former President Thabo Mbeki is likely to join COPE before the elections. Comment. Salie's seemingly genuine disappointment expressed several times throughout the conversation in COPE's poor organizational structure seems to indicate that he may have originally considering joining COPE, especially if what he said about Mbeki joining COPE is true since he (and Rasool) are both close to Mbeki. End comment.

MAYBERRY